



HOME FOR HELPING A historic renovation project is now underway to transform the Market Block Building (left) into the new home (right) for The Raymond John Wean Foundation, which is dedicated to improving communities and neighborhoods in the Mahoning Valley.

Market Block Takes Shape

Restoration project aims to preserve, update historic structure in downtown Warren

Over the past two decades, The Chesler Group has completed dramatic restoration projects at more than 25 historic buildings in Northeast Ohio, most recently finishing work at ASM International's World Headquarters in Russell Township (see full story, *Properties*, August 2011). Led by Michael Chesler, the firm is now well underway with its latest project: a complete historic restoration of the Market Block Building in downtown Warren.

The Market Block Building, at 147 West Market Street, is situated on the historic Courthouse Square in Warren, Ohio. Constructed in the 1860s, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Warren Commercial Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is comprised of various commercial and governmental entities that surround Warren's Courthouse Square and is a major attraction of downtown Warren and Trumbull County. The 147 West Market Street property is located in the district directly across the main entrance of the Trumbull County Courthouse. According to the National Register nomination, it has been identified as a contributing historic structure to the historic district. Even though the building has been vacant since 2008, its historic integrity has been preserved. As a major commercial structure in a prominent downtown location, it has played a significant role in Warren's history for over 120 years.

The Chesler Group, working with Dimit Architects and Timothy J. Norris

& Associates, is currently performing a complete historic restoration in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The comprehensive interior and exterior restoration, which began in July 2012 and is targeting completion in summer 2012, will include all new mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire suppression systems. New code compliant egress stairs, elevator, restrooms and door openings will be installed to make the building ADA compliant. Significant work will be done on the building exterior, including window and storefront restoration, masonry restoration and roof replacement. The result will be an updated, code compliant, modern office building within a historic shell.

The building is a fine example of an Italianate/Tuscan style historic storefront. It was originally constructed as three separate structures. These buildings were combined into one building at some point in the late 19th century and the current façade dates to pre WWI with multiple storefront modifications.

The building was the town Woolworth's for possibly 40 years, then becoming a Dollar General and most recently it was used as County offices. The building has been vacant since 2008.

Once completed, the restored building will be the new headquarters of The Raymond John Wean Foundation, a private foundation founded in 1949, dedicated to improving the communities and neighborhoods in the Mahoning Valley. The Wean Foundation is a recognized leader in providing services and in creating opportunities for economically distressed areas in Trumbull and Mahoning counties.

The newly renovated building will not only house Wean Foundation's staff offices, it will also serve as community meeting space and accommodate incubator office space for non-profit programs in the Warren area. The restoration of The Market Block Building will strengthen Downtown Warren and support stability as Wean Foundation continues its efforts and commitment in revitalizing neighborhoods and mobilizing local resources. **P**